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IN THE CLAIMS

Please replace the previous claims with the following claims:

1. (currently amended) A system for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system that is targeted to a system user, said system comprising:
 - a) a network headend for transmitting at least one information stream to a plurality of users, said information stream being comprised of a plurality of information selections and a plurality of corresponding codes, each said code identifying a characteristic of a corresponding one of said selections that is employed used to identify a system user to whom additional information related to said selection should be transmitted;
 - b) a distribution network for transmitting said information stream with said codes; and
 - c) a plurality of terminal devices interfaced to said distribution network for receiving said information stream, each said terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a corresponding user of said terminal device, said terminal processor being programmed to compare each code for each selection in said information stream with said demographic information in said database, and determine therefrom whether said user is designated to receive said additional information related to said selection, said terminal processor being further programmed to provide a prompt to said user designated to receive said additional information, said prompt being embedded in said information stream.
2. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said headend further includes an encoder for generating said codes, and inserting said codes into said information stream, one each before a corresponding one of said selections.

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3. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said information stream is a video information stream, said broadcast distribution system is a cable television distribution system, and said terminal devices are each a set top converter box.

4. (original) The system of claim 3, wherein said information selections include advertisements.

5. (currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein said terminal processor is further programmed to provide a prompt to a corresponding user if said processor determines that said user is designated to receive said additional information comprises a voice prompt.

6. (original) The system of claim 5, wherein said headend further includes a database containing said additional information that is to be made available to selected system users, based on the demographic information in the user demographic database.

7. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said headend includes a multiplexer for simultaneously transmitting a plurality of said information streams on a plurality of corresponding downstream channels that are interfaced between said distribution network and said terminal devices, each said information stream including information selections that are targeted to different user demographics, and said terminal processor in each said terminal is programmed to determine a selected one of said downstream channels on which a selected information selection targeted to a user of said terminal device is to be received, and access said selected information selection.

8. (original) The system of claim 7, wherein said terminal device further includes a tuner for selecting a one of said downstream channels to receive, and said terminal processor is further programmed to instruct said tuner to tune to said selected one of said downstream channels to receive said selected information selection.

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9. (original) The system of claim 8, wherein said terminal processor is further programmed to instruct said tuner to tune back to a previously selected channel after a designated one of said selections has been received.

10. (original) The system of claim 7, wherein said information streams include at least one group of information selections, each selection of which is simultaneously transmitted with the other selections in said group, and is targeted to users having different demographics than those of users to which the other selections in said group are targeted.

11. (original) The system of claim 10, wherein said headend further includes an insertion module for inserting said groups of information selections into said information streams.

12. (original) The system of claim 10, wherein each information selection in said groups comprises an advertisement.

13. (original) The system of claim 11, wherein each information selection is transmitted in a different PID of a common digital channel.

14. (currently amended) A method for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system that is targeted to a system user comprising:

a) providing at least one information stream in a network headend, said information stream being comprised of a plurality of information selections and a plurality of corresponding codes, each said code identifying a characteristic of a corresponding one of said selections that is employed used to identify a system user to whom additional information related to said selection should be transmitted;

b) transmitting said at least one information stream to a plurality of terminal devices, each said terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a corresponding user of said terminal device; and

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- c) employing said terminal processor to compare each code for each selection in said information stream with said demographic information in said database, and determine there from whether said user is designated to receive said additional information related to said selection; and
- d) providing a prompt to said user designated to receive said additional information, said prompt being embedded in said information stream.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said codes are inserted in said at least one information stream by an encoder in said headend.

16. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein said information stream is a video information stream, said broadcast distribution system is a cable television distribution system, and said terminal devices are each a set top converter box.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein said information selections include advertisements.

18. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a prompt to a corresponding user if said terminal processor determines that said user is designated to receive said additional information.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of transmitting said additional information from a database in said headend.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said step of transmitting further comprises:

- 1) multiplexing a plurality of said information streams and simultaneously transmitting said plurality of information streams, each said information stream including information selections that are targeted to different user demographics;
- 2) determining with said terminal processor a selected one of said information selections that is targeted to a user of said terminal device; and

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3) accessing said selected one of said information selections from said information stream.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein said terminal device further includes a tuner for selecting a one of said downstream channels to receive, and said step of accessing further comprises instructing said tuner with said terminal processor to tune to said selected one of said downstream channels to receive said selected information selection.

22. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of instructing said tuner with said terminal processor to tune back to a previously selected channel after a designated one of said selections has been received.

23. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein said information streams include at least one group of information selections, each selection of which is simultaneously transmitted with the other selections in said group, and is targeted to users having different demographics than those of users to which the other selections in said group are targeted.

24. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein each information selection in said group is transmitted in a different PID of a common digital channel.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein (a) comprises obtaining said information selections, generating said codes, and inserting said codes into said information stream, each said code inserted before a corresponding one of said information selections.

26. (withdrawn) A system for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system, the system comprising:

a) a network headend for transmitting at least one digital information stream to a plurality of users, the digital information stream comprising a plurality of

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advertisements and at least one code corresponding to each advertisement, each of the plurality of advertisements comprising a continuous stream of I-frames for a predetermined amount of time at the beginning and end of each advertisement;

b) a distribution network for transmitting the digital information stream; and
c) a plurality of terminal devices interfaced to the distribution network for receiving the digital information stream, each terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a user of the terminal device, the terminal processor being programmed to compare each code for each advertisement with the demographic information in said database and determine therefrom which of the plurality of advertisements the user is designated to receive.

27. (withdrawn) The system of claim 26, wherein each advertisement comprises a data stream which is adapted so that during receipt of the data stream a decoder buffer is known to be at a particular state at the end of each advertisement.

28. (withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein each advertisement of the plurality of advertisements comprises digitally encoded data, and each advertisement of the plurality of advertisements contain the same amount of digitally encoded data.

29. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said user demographic database is adapted to be private to said terminal device and not shared with said network headend and said distribution network.

30. (currently amended) The system of claim [[5]] 1, wherein said prompt is embedded in said information stream comprises at least one of: a text overlay or an icon; and

wherein said additional information is broadcast on a carousel basis on a dedicated channel on said distribution network to said plurality of users, and wherein access to said additional information is obtainable only by said system user designated

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to receive said additional information and whom requests said additional information in response to said prompt.